

2.12 SPECIAL ISSUES RELATING TO THE TRUST MANDATE

Comments to the DEIS from various parties questioned the effect of several proposed policies on the trust beneficiaries. In particular, several parties voiced concerns that proposed policies, which allowed the department to exceed the Forest Practices Act in protecting watersheds, riparian areas and other public resources, might result in reduced income to trust beneficiaries.

The department does not believe these policies will have a substantial, long-term impact on income generated from state forest land. The decision to exceed Forest Practices Act regulations will be made in special circumstances where the department believes it is necessary to provide extra protection for soil, water, fish or other public resources on state forest land. In those situations, the department will accept a reduction in **current** income or return on investment.

The department believes this policy (Policy No. 30, Silviculture Activities, at page 98) is consistent with its trust mandate.

In addition, the department has added a brief discussion of these and other trust mandate issues in the introduction to the Public Comment volume.

2.13 ONGOING (PHASED) SEPA REVIEW

This environmental impact statement is prepared pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), which requires state agencies to analyze the impact of their actions on the environment. Because this is only a policy document, the department intends to conduct additional environmental review (in phases) as it prepares to undertake site-specific activities. This process is part of the ongoing SEPA review and reflects the department's belief that the Forest Resource Plan is a dynamic document that must respond to the challenges of the 1990s.

2.14 LIST OF PREFERRED POLICIES

The preferred policies adopted by the department for inclusion in the Forest Resource Plan are printed below. There are 40 policies, numbered in order.

2.14.1 Trust Asset Management

There are 15 trust asset management policies. A discussion of the alternatives is contained in Chapter 3. For more background information, see Chapter 3 of the Forest Resource Plan.

Policy No. 1: Federal Grant Land Base

The department will maintain a diversified base of Federal Grant lands, including nonforest properties. In deciding whether to sell, exchange or acquire lands, the department will balance current economic returns and trust benefits with future economic returns and trust benefits.

Policy No. 2: Forest Board Land Base

The department will perpetuate a productive forest base of Forest Board lands. In deciding whether to exchange lands, the department will assess whether timber harvesting is impractical on these properties and, if so, will attempt to replace them with productive forest lands.

Policy No. 3: Land Classifications

The department intends to designate those lands and timber resources that are unavailable for harvest as "off base." All deferrals will be included in this category.

Policy No. 4: Sustainable, Even-Flow Timber Harvest

The department will manage state forest lands to produce a sustainable, even-flow harvest of timber, subject to economic, environmental and regulatory considerations.

Policy No. 5: Harvest Levels Based on Volume

The department's harvest calculations will be based on volume rather than acreage or other considerations.

Policy No. 6: Western Washington Ownership Groups

The department will establish a sustained, even-flow harvest level within specified ownership groups in Western Washington, as follows:

1. Forest Board Transfer lands, where the harvest will be calculated by individual counties.
2. Federal Grant lands and Forest Board Purchase lands, where the harvest will be calculated by department administrative regions.
3. The Capitol State Forest, which will be considered a separate ownership group.
4. The Olympic Experimental State Forest, which will also be considered a separate ownership group.

Policy No. 7: Eastern Washington Ownership Groups

The department will establish sustained, even-flow harvest levels within specified ownership groups in Eastern Washington, as follows:

1. Yakima River.
2. Klickitat.
3. Highlands and South Okanogan.
4. Arcadia.
5. North Columbia.

Policy No. 8: Special Forest Products

The department will encourage and promote the sale of special forest products where appropriate and will market them in a manner consistent with the overall policies of this plan.

Policy No. 9: Forest Health

The department will incorporate forest health practices into the management of state forest land to bring about a net benefit through the reduction or prevention of significant forest resource losses from insects, diseases, animals and other similar threats to trust assets.

Policy No. 10: Fire Protection

The department will supplement the state's fire protection program to bring about a net benefit through the reduction of significant resource losses from wildfire on department-managed land.

Policy No. 11: Managing "On Base" Lands

The department will manage "on base" forest lands at different levels of intensity depending on biological productivity and economic potential. Investment decisions will be made according to expected returns.

Policy No. 12: Annual Review of Financial Assumptions

The department will review and adjust annually its financial assumptions used in management decisions.

Policy No. 13: Special Ecological Features

The department will identify state forest lands with special ecological features that fill critical gaps in ecosystem diversity, and it will seek legislation and funding to remove these lands from trust ownership.

Policy No. 14: Old Growth Research Area Deferrals

During this planning period, the department will continue to defer from harvest certain old growth research stands in Western Washington to maintain the ability to acquire information on ecological relationships which may affect intensive timber management.

Policy No. 15: The Genetic Resource

The department will protect and enhance a diverse gene pool of native trees on state forest lands to ensure well-adapted future, commercial forests.

2.14.2 Forest Land Planning

There are 14 forest land planning policies. A discussion of the alternatives is contained in Chapter 4. For more background information, see Chapter 4 of the Forest Resource Plan.

Policy No. 16: Landscape Planning

The department will develop plans by setting management objectives for specified landscapes consistent with the Forest Resource Plan.

Policy No. 17: Soliciting Information

The department will solicit comments from interested parties, including local neighborhoods, tribes and government agencies when preparing landscape-level objectives.

Policy No. 18: SEPA Review

The department will conduct a SEPA review when subsequent plans and activities constitute a non-exempt agency action under the Act.

Policy No. 19: Watershed Analysis

The department will analyze by watershed the effects of past, present and reasonably foreseeable future activities on water quality and quantity, and it will modify operations to control risks to public resources and trust interests.

Policy No. 20: Riparian Management Zones

The department will establish riparian management zones along Type 1-4 waters and when necessary along Type 5 waters. The department will focus its efforts on protecting key nontimber resources, such as water quality, fish, wildlife habitat and sensitive plant species.

Policy No. 21: Wetlands

The department will allow no overall net loss of naturally-occurring wetland acreage and function.

Policy No. 22: Habitat Policy

The department will provide habitat for wildlife habitat conditions which have the capacity to sustain native wildlife species or communities. The department will develop wildlife habitat objectives based upon habitat availability and function, species status and species vulnerability, and trust obligations. When there are apparent conflicts between meeting wildlife habitat and trust management objectives, the department will seek balanced solutions and policies.

Policy No. 23: Endangered Species

The department will meet the requirements of federal and state laws and other legal requirements that protect endangered, threatened and sensitive species and their habitats. The department will actively participate in efforts to recover and restore endangered and threatened species to the extent that such participation is consistent with trust obligations.

Policy No. 24: Identifying Historic Sites

The department will establish a program to identify and inventory historic and archaeological sites and protect them at a level which, at a minimum, meets regulatory requirements.

Policy No. 25: Providing Public Access

The department will provide public access for multiple uses on state forest lands. In certain circumstances the department will control vehicular or other access, but only where necessary to accomplish specific management objectives. Public access may be closed, restricted or limited to protect public safety; to prevent theft, vandalism and garbage dumping; to protect soils, water quality, plants and animals; or to meet other objectives identified in the plan.

Policy No. 26: Granting Public Rights of Way

The department will grant rights of way to private individuals or entities when there is an opportunity for enhancing trust assets and when any detriments are offset.